CGS Investigator Training Q&A

Q: Will an Institute have a dedicated pre/post-award specialist or could we work with a different specialist for each proposal?
A: Depending on the size of the unit, you may or may not have a handful of pre-award / post-award individuals. Each Investigator will have a specific individual they will work with on both the pre- and post-award sides. Occasionally, workload spikes in one specialist's assignment could necessitate coverage by other staff member.

Q: How much lead time will be needed before the grant proposal gets submitted to the funding agency?
A: General rule of thumb is that the Proposal Initiation Form (PIF) is submitted one month ahead (more for complex proposals). The grant specialist will start the process of reaching out to the investigator at least within 48 hours after receiving the PIF and will start the IAF in the system at that time. Normally, with a month's lead time, Weeks 4 and 3 are for work on the IAF, and Weeks 2 and 1 are for working on the proposal.

Q: For the new system, a hub-specific grants management appears to be replacing the college-specific grants management. Is that accurate? Have other institutions adopted this type of system? If so, has it been favorable?
A: Yes, the University is moving to a shared services model for this aspect of research grant support. CGS has three hubs of support which are detailed on the CGS website. Other institutions have adopted this approach and conversations were held with multiple schools that have this shared services approach.

Q: Regarding the "Other Support"- when initiated, will the other support information self populate or will the PI be responsible for adding that information?
A: A portion of the Other Support portal will self populate from the OSPA Database. There are a handful of tabs you - as the Investigator - will be required to complete. Once you've completed this step, you'll submit where it will be reviewed by either your Pre- or Post-Award Grant Specialist for accuracy and final lock-down.

Q: One issue that we have run into in the past, is that after we have submitted the budget information "as soon as possible" the budgets may vary slightly once the scientific narrative is completed, yet we are told that we cannot change budgets, even within a few dollars. This makes it difficult to reconcile budgets that are established early and narratives that are refined. I would hope for some flexibility in reconciling these two items within the 6-day window.
A: Budget variations that are within 25% of the total budget do not require a revised IAF. The IAF budget should be as complete and final as possible. Your grant specialist can make minor budget changes after the IAF routes, but we request that no further changes be made to the budget after the 6 day deadline unless requested by your specialist.

Q: I have been approached by sponsors in the past with last minute request where they offered to fund a project if we could take the funds within two days. It was end of financial

year and they had excess funds ($50-100k). We were unable to take the funds within their timeframe. Is it possible to have a mechanism for this, admittedly odd, circumstance?
A: We want to help you be able to receive this money, it's a matter of how fast we can do this. With last minute proposals, as part of new SOPs, we are going to be looking at different ways internally to help triage those last-minute proposals, we are not there just yet with mechanism for specific situation, but work with Grant Specialist and they will escalate up to their supervisors; we will have more processes put in place to deal with those situations. If we can get majority of proposals submitted in these deadlines, it frees up time for CGS staff and Investigators to be able to work on those last minute proposals that come up; greater efficiency will create more time for this.

Q: Will the DAs be meeting with the PI and the Grant Specialist to review monthly expenditure reports?
A: It is our hope all relevant personnel will be able to attend those monthly meetings along with the Investigator. Normally, the DA is copied on the meeting request, if they would like to attend.

Q: It seems like subawards vary from institution to institution, especially when we are sub awarded. Is that kind of flex going to exist with working with different institutions, will there be specific timelines for specific universities?
A: The 6, 4 and 3 Day deadlines are all calibrated as to when our sponsor (the institution wanting to issue us a subaward) needs our subaward documents. The investigator and grant specialist should work together to determine what is reasonable and the grant specialist can work with OSPA to request an extension if needed.

Q: There have been cases where PI has been offered funding or alliance with someone that is not NIH or familiar in our department -- is that something we send to CGS to see if they can do it?
A: If external funding is anticipated, please send to your grant specialist for a determination on whether the project will be handled by our office.

Q: Deadlines were mentioned for science and non-science, and previous GATeWAY documents also mentioned deadlines for responses in case of an inquiry. Are we contemplating deadlines for resolution of requests? My main concern is 48-hour deadline for response to inquiry would leave the request unresolved? What are the expectations for response times?
A: 48 hours refer to non-urgent requests. If a request is urgent, please let your grant specialist know. They will work with their supervisor, if needed, to ensure a timely response. CGS staff will respond to any request submitted within 24-hours, with the understanding that when an investigator/researcher and staff member are actively working on a request, communication will be more frequent. In the event that your CGS staff member is out of the office on a planned or unplanned absence, their designated back-up staff member will address your request. For planned absences, staff members will be required to notify the leads of those whom they serve of the staff member who will be designated to respond while they are not working. For unplanned absences, staff members will be required to leave contact information for their back-up via their out-of-office message in Outlook.